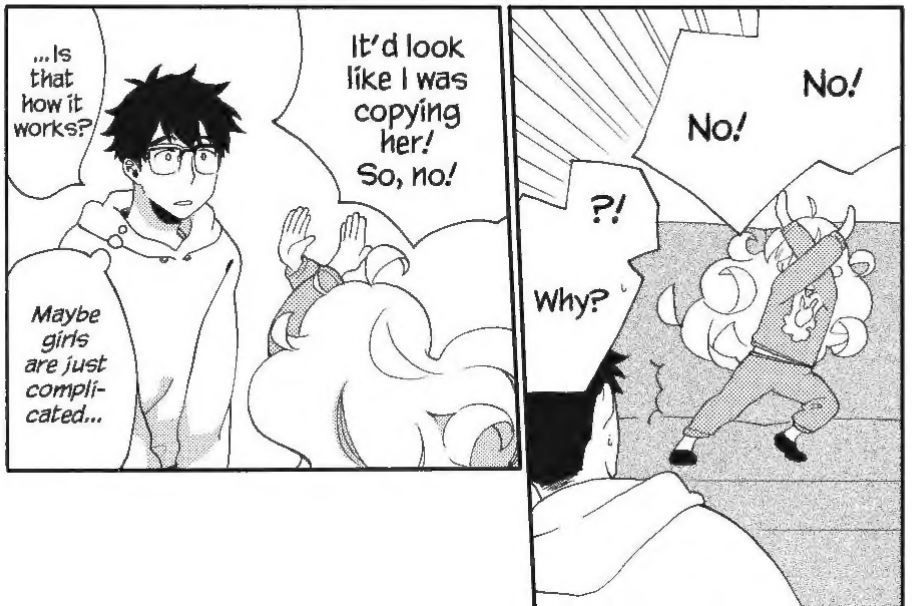
Happy birthday!
Happy birthday, Yuka-chan!
Her clothes are cute too!
Yuka-chan's so cute, huh?
Thank you!
Thank you, everyone!

Chapter 23 | A Birthday and Sushi Cake

POKE
ぽっ？
When you stretch, your belly sticks out!
Oh...
POP
ぽっ
We need to buy you some new clothes soon.
It's almost your birth-day.
Fa—
Fancy... clothes?
FIDGET もじ
FIDGET もじ
FANCY CLOTHES?

Oh...
So like the dress Yuka-chan was wearing, right?
ばーん
TA-DAH!
Would you draw me the kind of fancy you're thinking of?
Okay!
Define "fancy"
フンフン
HRM HRM!


...Is that how it works?
It'd look like I was copying her! So, no!
Maybe girls are just complicated...
No!
No!
?!
Why?

O-Okay, we'll have a party.
Then I want a birthday party too!
Match-ing...
But it might be nice to have matching outfits!
One where everybody comes over! Like Yuka-chan! And Hana-chan! And...
Okay! I'll ask!
And I wanna wear a dress...
...and make food and be a host!
At the restaurant!

Yeah!
Make sure you ask! Make sure, okay?
Hm, maybe if we can reserve the whole place for lunch...? I better ask.
Hmm...
If we go to the restaurant, Kotori-chan will be there!
RAWR!
The restaurant...
Okay! Let's have a party!
Uh...
I'll do my best...
All right, can you ask about the dress then?
If you've got any requests let me know.
Sure, you can reserve it.
Paper Pattern
Uh...
I'll do my best.
That dress is handmade, is that okay?
I bought the pattern at a store, though.
WHISPER
Really ...?
Matching dresses... How wonderful...

WHZZ
Whatcha doing?
Measuring your dress size.
"Size" means how big I am, right?
DASH
How tall am I now?

You're six centimeters taller than last year.
110
105
Age 5
103 cm

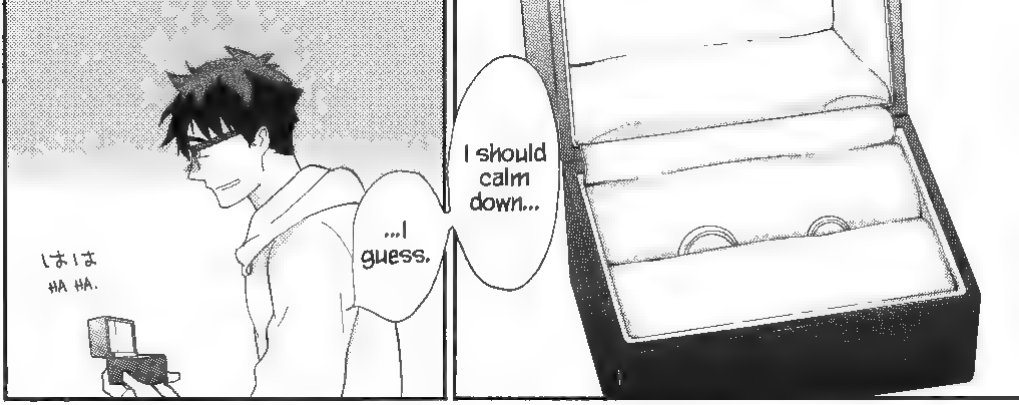
Yay! I'm big!

4/1
3/24
3/17
4/5

I—
I did it!
コチ
TICK
TICK
コチ
TICK
コチ
Um, all that's left is the ribbon. That won't take long.
I'll finish it before we start setting up at 10 A.M.!
I'm so glad...
Daddy, the phone's ringing...
Hmm?
RING
RING
RING RING
ZZZ
ZZZ
はっ
GASP
Huh—?!
Wha—? How—? What time is it?

It's not done!
I-I overslept! Sorry, I'll leave right away—
GASP
It's a little past ten.
Is everything all right?
Kotori-chan!
Ready to go, Tsumugi-chan?
...
Uh...
If you like...
Okay, see you later!
BOW
BOW

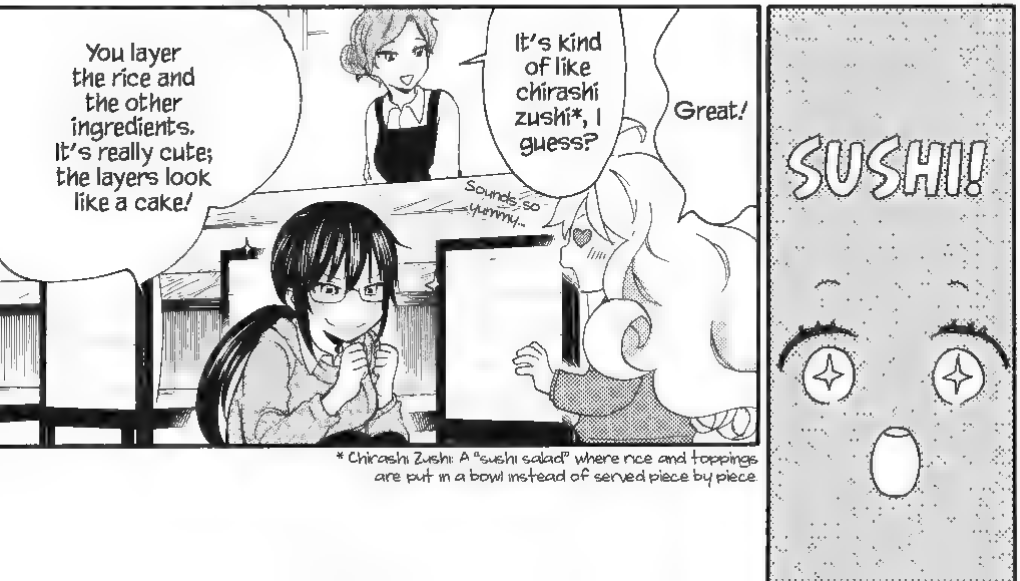
CRASH
GAAH!
TRIP
Gotta hurry! Gotta hurry!
AAAAAHH!!
WAH WAH WAH
N-Not...
...now...
...


I should calm down...
...I guess.
はは
HA HA.

She's grown up so much in the past year.
KATTA-TATTA
タン タン タン

Tae...
タン タン タン タン
KATTA-TATTA-TATTA
It's really gone so fast...

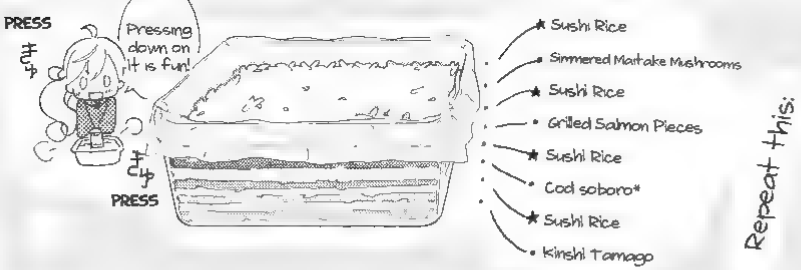
Thank you for letting me come over!
No problem!
Thanks for coming!
BOW
We're gonna make fried chicken and Salisbury steak and stuff, right?
We're pretty much ready.
First, maybe we'll have you help with the sushi cake.


Great!
It's kind of like chirashi zushi*, I guess?
Sounds so yummy...
You layer the rice and the other ingredients. It's really cute; the layers look like a cake!
SUSHI!

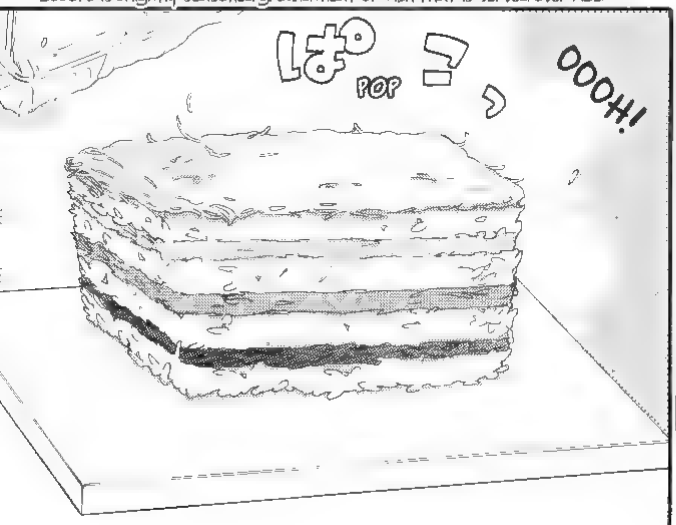
* Chirashi Zushi: A "sushi salad" where rice and toppings are put in a bowl instead of served piece by piece

When you fan it, the vinegar soaks into the rice and makes it glossy... right?
It's not really to cool it off...
You don't fan it to cool it off?
I saw that on TV.
She's trying to act like a big sister
You don't need to do it, but we might as well.
Add sugar and salt to vinegar and then mix it thoroughly into fresh rice.
My mom's gonna handle the other stuff..
...so we're going to make the sushi rice.
I added kombu when I made the rice
STIR
STIR
You're doing great!
YAY!
MAGIC!
FAN
FAN
Oh, it's magic to make it taste yummy!
I kinda didn't get that...
Hee hee
Then divide the rice into four parts...
...and add them to the pan...
...little by little.
If you make sure you put in enough to fill every corner, it will look neat when it's done.
NOD NOD
First you put kinshi tamago* on the very bottom.
Let me handle the toppings.

* Kinshi tamago: Shredded egg crepes.



*Soboro is a lightly-seasoned ground meat or fish that is served over rice.



Excuse me
We should have a reservation for Inuzuka...
Hello!
バトル
BATTLE
And we haven't even decorated it yet!
Hee hee...
It's cute! Like a cake!
Every-thing's okay!
I can do it!
Welcome!
Tsumugi-chan!
I got a message from your daddy. Is everything okay?
Let's put some really wonderful decorations on it and surprise your dad!
Okay...

Yeah!
Let's do it!
Let's all do it together!
Mikio-kun and Hana-chan and Yuka-chan too.
And Sugurukun too!
YAY!
Meh.
YAY!
li-da-san!
Yuka
She's my niece.
My big sister's daughter.
W-wha?
They said they were having a party at your place so I came along.
Did I startle you?

Oh, okay. Have fun!
Okay, I'm going to go help in the back...
Y-yeah...
Inuzuka-sensei's kid, right? I'm surprised you're connected to him that way.
Um, Tsumugi-chan is...
BA-DUM ドキ
BA-DUM ドキ
WHISPER ヒソヒソ
Do you think just maybe...
WHISPER ヒソヒソ
Wow, she's prettier than on TV.
I'm not doing anything wrong and I'm still nervous.
BA-DUM ドキドキ
BA-DUM ドキ
BA-DUM ドキ
Hey! Don't make rude assumptions like that.
~++ EEE!
Inuzuka-san's got something going on with her?

What's wrong, Kotori-chan?
N-Nothing...
Okay, then let's decorate it together!
Yeah.
* Sign: Tsumugi-chan Happy 6th birthday
DASH
Gasp
Gasp
DASH

Sorry I'm late!
RATTLE
ガラッ
!
So–
つむぎちゃん
おたんじょうかい
Sign: Tsumugi-chan's Birthday Party
SQUEAL
きゃっ
SQUEAL
きゃっ
CHATTER
ワイワイ
CHATTER
ワイワイ
Oh!
It's Daddy!
Hey, there.
You're earlier than I thought.
I'm lonely without daddy.
I'm really sorry! Can I get her changed before we start?
Go ahead!
You really are a big girl now, huh?

Is the size okay?
I can adjust it with the ribbon a little...
Why don't you change upstairs?

Ooh...
I'm sorry you had to do it all by yourself. But everybody helped, right?
I did it all by myself.
...
Tsu-mugi?

Tell me I'm a good girl some more.

You're a great girl!
You were a huge help! Thanks!
Yeah!

Okay!
I'll put my dress on then.
HEE HEE!

You look great.
Yeah... I'm glad.
How's it look?
Can I? Yay!
Thank you.
Would you like to try it on?
I got you a present.
Oh right, here.
Hee hee!
Should we give you a cute hairstyle?
Yeah! Yeah!

Thank you very much!
Daddy!
TWIRL
For growing up so big!
Thank you.
DING DONG

つむぎちゃん
6さい、おめでとう！
OOH!
So cute!
* Sign: Happy 6th Birthday Tsumugi-chan!
CLAP CLAP
パチパチ
We're back, everyone!
We match, don't we?
Yeah!
BOW
...for coming to my birthday party today!
パチ CLAP
パチ CLAP
パチ CLAP
Thank you all very much...
Thank you so much for coming today.
Tsumugi was born on a day in early spring when the cherry blossoms were blooming...
Um...
Everyone...

CHEERS!
Cheers!
Hey, you're too stiff!
...
Wow!
Let's eat!
I put this one on!
This looks so good!
It's so pretty!

I made this!
And we all put the decorations on.
This chirashi zushi is really good!
All right!
Yes, please!
It's a simple recipe. Want me to tell you how to make it later?
Cod soboro!
What's the white stuff?
And my kid usually hates shiitake mushrooms.
The simmered maitake mushrooms are really good, aren't they?
Happy-
Happy birth-day!
Happy birth-day!
Happy birth-day!
Oh!
Yeah, that's a great idea! I want to do that!
She's forcing them?
I know! Why don't we all go around and have everyone say happy birthday!

Yay!
I brought a cake!
Special delivery!
Happy birthday.
I just came over to say hi.
Gosh! Stop fighting, you two.
Shut up!
He didn't say it! He didn't say it!
Yay! A cake!
Can you tell me how to make that pressed sushi later...?
Daddy!
I'm glad it worked out!
Oh my, not at all!
Thank you so much for letting us do this today.

* Sign: Tsumugi-chan Happy 6th Birthday

TSUMUGI...!!
I want somebody like Daddy, so I don't want to marry either of you!
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
Is it too early to marry my Mikio, you think?
Ah ha ha ha!
Tsumugi-chan's dress is white, so it looks like a wedding dress.

To be continued...